

Summary of Relevant Transportation Legislation

State of Washington

1971-1998

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes enacted transportation legislation in the state of Washington from the period 1971-1998, specifically legislation that would be of interest to the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation. Also summarized is non-enacted legislation that raises new or innovative ideas.

The report was written through use of legislative session summaries compiled by Legislative Transportation Committee staff following each legislative session. Legislative session summaries were missing from 1972 and 1976, and then again for 1980, 1981, and 1982. However, most of the twenty-eight years of legislation are accounted for, and are included in this document.

The report is divided into three separate sections - Administrative Issues, Investment Issues, and Revenue Issues - to mirror the Commission's three committees. Specific criteria for a bill's inclusion in each section are listed in the report. In general, however, Administrative issues are those which seek improvements and efficiencies in transportation policies and programs, Investment issues are those which identify transportation investments or planning advancements, and Revenue issues are those which identify transportation funding mechanisms.

A short summary of the legislation follows:

Administrative Issues

- WSDOT created (1977 — enacted)
- Transportation Commission made advisory (1986, 1987 — not enacted)
- Regional transportation planning required (1990 — enacted)
- Reducing cost overruns on transportation projects (1992 — not enacted, but eventually incorporated into WSDOT)
- Statewide multimodal plan required (1993 — enacted)
- Assessing environmental costs of transportation projects (1993 — enacted)
- Relieving select transportation facilities from local permit requirements (1993 — not enacted)
- Streamlining WSDOT environmental permit process (1994 — enacted)

- Environmental mitigation revolving account (1997 — enacted)
- Transportation agencies performance-based budgeting (1998 — enacted)
- Freight mobility strategic investment program (1998 — enacted)
- Level of service requirements (1998 — enacted)
- Design-build construction method authorized – pilot (1998 — enacted)

Investment Issues

- Road Jurisdiction Study (1989 — partially enacted)
- Commute Trip Reduction programs (1991 — enacted)
- Statewide transit planning (1992 — not enacted)
- Public-private transportation initiatives (1993 — enacted, 1995 — rewritten)
- Transit accountability (1997 — not enacted)

Revenue Issues

- Variable gas tax rate (1977, 1983 — enacted)
- Amendment allowing gas tax to be used for public transportation systems (1977, 1991 — not enacted)
- Local option gas tax for specific projects in a city or a county – sunsetted (1979 — enacted; later proposed for numerous projects)
- Local option sales tax for specific cities for highway projects (1986 — not enacted)
- Project specific toll authority (1987 — enacted; see also Public-private transportation initiatives)
- Transportation impact fees authorized (1988 — enacted)
- Statewide gas tax increases (proposed numerous times; enacted 1983 and 1990)
- Business tax on employers for transit and carpool system (1989 — not enacted)
- Local option taxes – statewide (1990 — enacted)
- High capacity transit taxes authorized (1990 — enacted)
- Local option taxes – international border counties (1991 — enacted)
- Transit use of farebox and other operating revenues for MVET match (1992 — not enacted)
- Extended sales tax to gas (1993, Governor Lowry's transportation package — not enacted)
- Remove voter approval for local option fuel tax for counties (1993, Governor Lowry's transportation package — not enacted)
- Sales/use tax on ferry and highway construction transferred from state general fund to the transportation fund (1995 — not enacted)
- New local option transportation taxes for cities (1997 — not enacted)